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November 13, 1980

MEMORANDUM

TO: Messrs. Kornegay, Milway, Panzer, Kerrigan,  
Rupp and Stanford.

FROM: Peter Sparber

SUBJECT: Burson-Marsteller recommendations on fire  
safety program and initial contact with  
fire fighting organizations.

October 28, Burson-Marsteller was asked to prepare a plan describing how TI might contact various fire fighting organizations for the ultimate purpose of dealing with the issue of residential fire safety.

Attached are Burson-Marsteller's recommendations which I am distributing in Bill Kloepfer's absence.

When Bill returns, we will organize a meeting to discuss this paper and consider further actions.

Please contact me if you require further information.

Thank you.

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TO: Bill Kloepfer  
FROM: Jim Carr

# Burson-Marsteller

## THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE

### "ADDRESSING THE SMOKING/FIRE SAFETY ISSUE"

#### Situation

Residential fires are the main killer of U.S. citizens. In fact, roughly three-fourths of all fire deaths occur in residences, according to 1977 National Fire Data Center figures.

Smoking is blamed for the highest known proportion of fire deaths and injuries. Specifically, 10 percent of all residential fires are attributed to smoking, as are 22 percent of the deaths and 18 percent of the injuries. These statistics are probably not totally accurate given the often cursory investigations conducted at many fire scenes. This is a moot point, however, because they have been publicized and accepted by the public, firefighters and legislators.

Based on the plethora of reports indicating careless smoking is the main known cause of residential fires, organizations, most notably the Burn Association, have mounted successful lobbying efforts with local, state and federal legislators. The result has been the introduction of numerous bills calling for everything from flame-retardant fabrics to self-extinguishing cigarettes.

It is generally believed that the tobacco industry can produce a self-extinguishing cigarette at will. Consequently, the industry is perceived as insensitive to the problem.

Problem Statement

The most immediate and potentially the most damaging problem facing the tobacco industry is pending legislation which proposes product modifications that would make it unacceptable to consumers. In short, sales could be dramatically affected with the passage of these unenlightened bills.

Aside from on-going research to develop an acceptable self-extinguishing cigarette, the tobacco industry cannot currently point to anything it is doing to reduce the incidence of smoking-related fires. The Tobacco Institute's lobbyists and legal counsel agree it is essential the industry get actively involved in some visible effort to dramatize its concern about the problem and thus minimize the likelihood that intrusive laws will be enacted.

Objectives

1. To reduce the incidence of smoking-related fires
2. To reduce the potential for "unenlightened" legislation
3. To counter "anti" group activities

Strategies

1. Establish a low key, effective public service fire safety program
2. Position the tobacco industry as a concerned "part of the solution" to influentials, especially legislators
3. Seek third party support, especially from the firefighting communities

Criteria

Any program the industry adopts should meet the following criteria to maximize effectiveness and minimize risks:

1. It must be a highly CREDIBLE effort
2. It must be RESULTS-ORIENTED
3. It must be DOCUMENTABLE
4. It must be TARGETED
5. It must be TESTABLE
6. It must be a tobacco FAMILY effort

Program

Based on our experience in the area of public service fire safety programs, we feel it is essential to actively enlist the support and direction of the various firefighting organizations. They are the experts and their voices applauding our efforts will carry significant weight with legislators. We recommend the following course of action to realize this objective:

1. Background Session

A. Logistics

- B-M to invite via telephone three to five influential firefighters it has worked closely with during the past four years (see attached bios)
- B-M to follow up with confirmation letter
- Conduct at B-M offices in NYC with lunch or dinner to follow
- Offer each a \$500 honorarium plus expenses to attend
- TI representative(s) to attend

**B. Content**

- Should be up front and note TI is client
- Exploratory (see attached sheet of proposed questions)
- No commitments of any kind to be made
- B-M/TI to develop specific agenda for legal approval

**C. Rationale**

B-M has a personal relationship with the invitees and a very positive "track record" in maintaining the integrity of public service fire safety programs. These individuals have been selected based on their knowledge of the problem of accidental fires, the firefighting community and their exhibited receptiveness to assist in the development of fire safety programs for companies and organizations.

This preliminary session will provide us with invaluable direction. As with any situation you cannot totally control, however, there are risks. We feel the possibility here is minimal because of the profiles noted above. This is not to say we will not be in for some critical remarks, but we view even this as a positive because the extent of the problem/public perception has to be known before moving to the program development stage.

The other option of having B-M or TI author and distribute a letter "cold" to the leaders in the firefighting community does not appear to be a good approach. There is definitely more risk potential here because this vehicle does not allow us to effectively present our intentions. They

could be misconstrued and any hope of enlisting needed support lost. The personal approach will allow the sincerity and concern of TI to be evident. A letter obviously cannot always accomplish this.

2. Program Elements

Specific program elements including school kits, films, etc. will be developed as directed by the professionals. However, we envision a program that ties local fire departments to TAN, that is, we provide TAN operations with the hardware and direction to work with local departments. A test in a pilot market should precede any national effort.

Also, straight donations for local or national projects should be avoided. We say we care about the problem by getting involved. Dollar donations will merely beg the question "is that all lives mean to the industry?"

The program should address the entire area of accidental fires and not concentrate on those attributed to careless smoking. And, the program should low key TI identification but be highly visible to produce the quality results needed to establish a case for industry concern.

Background Sketches of Proposed Invitees

Note: These individuals have either served on the Burger King Fire Safety Advisory Board or were closely associated with it.

1. Jack Cooper: Fire Chief, Edmonds, Washington. During his 27 years in fire service, Mr. Cooper worked as a fire fighter and as a fire protection engineer for Unigard Insurance. Since joining the Edmonds fire department in 1965, he prepared a training manual on "Home Safety Survey Program" (which has been adapted by several states) and spoke publically on home fire safety and the Edmonds survey program.
2. Hans R. Grigo: Assistant Manager -- Home Department and Technical Consultant, National Safety Council. In addition to having been technical consultant in home safety for twelve years, Mr. Grigo has authored, reviewed and consulted on many articles and publications and edits a bimonthly newsletter on the technical aspects of home safety. He is NSC's representative on the Underwriters Laboratories Consumers Advisory Council and has served as the Council's Safety director.
3. James Shern: Chief Shern entered the fire service in 1948 with the L.A. city fire department. He progressed through the ranks to the position of Battalion Chief before retiring in 1972. Chief Shern has held the position of Fire Prevention Engineer with the State of California Fire Prevention Bureau.

He has instructed fire service classes and has conducted various courses through the University of Southern California. He organized the L.A. Fire Department laboratory, which gained national prominence. Chief Shern is Vice Chairman of California State Board of Fire Services and a board member of the League of California Cities. He holds a B.A. degree in Physical Science from California State College, L.A.

Alternates:

1. Don Flynn, general manager of International Association of Fire Chiefs, Wash., D.C.
2. Colin Campbell, IAFC, Wash., D.C.
3. David Vago, Grand Rapids Fire Department, fire prevention officer
4. Andrew Casper, San Francisco Fire Chief

Proposed Questions

1. Do you think the firefighting community would have any philosophical programs?
2. If so, is there some way to overcome these feelings?
3. How can the tobacco industry be part of the solution?
4. Should a formal advisory board be established?
5. We are not looking for identification, is this a positive?
6. How would you recommend getting a program going? Steps?
7. Would you be willing to help us directly?
8. What fire safety programs exist and who sponsors them?
9. Is there a need for another program?
10. Are local fire departments in need of educational materials for community fire safety projects?
11. Where should we pilot our program?
12. How should we evaluate the program?
13. Where can we get the most reliable data on fires and their causes?